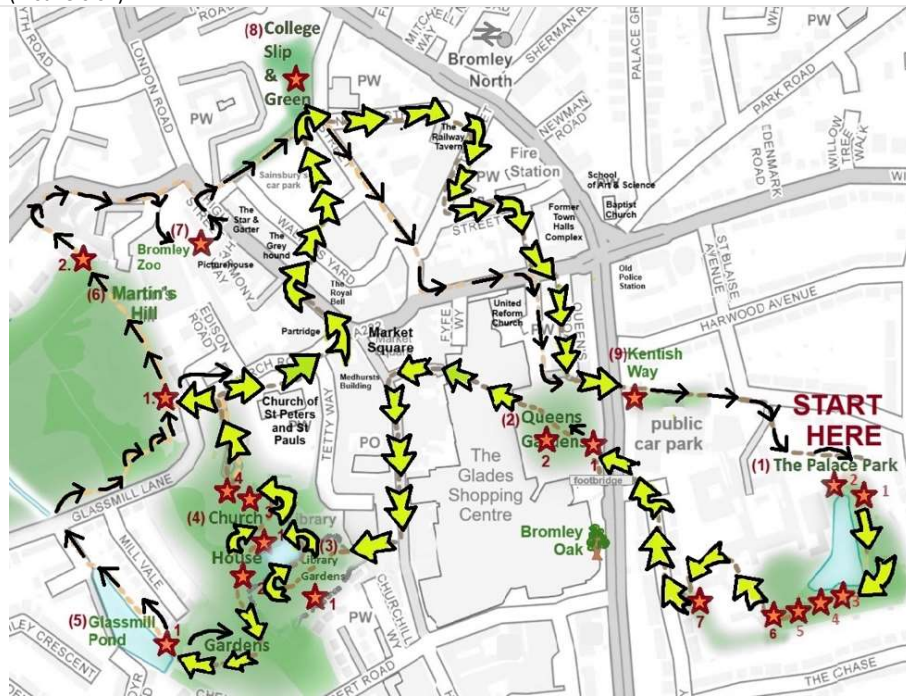


Bromley Town Parks Heritage & Biodiversity Trail

(first version)



Start the walk by going through the gates off Rochester Way at BR1 3DD

1.1 St Blaise's Well: This well was a local pilgrimage site for 100s of years before all traces were lost in the Reformation. It was rediscovered in 1754 when 'Spa' treatments were popular.

To continue the Heritage Trail, follow the little path (on the right hand side of the Carriage Drive) and on your right there is a rocky cliff – this is the fernery.

1.2 The Pulhamite Fernery: More than half of this Victorian status-symbol installation had been lost for years before it was uncovered this year by the Friends (FOBTAG). The 'rocks' are sculpted out of Pulhamite, and it is said to be better than the one at Buckingham Palace. Fern collecting was a popular Victorian hobby.

To continue the Heritage Trail, retrace your footsteps back to the carriage drive and follow it around the Moat.

1.3 The Medieval Moat: This lake is the last remnant of the water than surrounded the old Bishops Palace into the 1750s, by which time it was used as fish ponds. Fish was an essential part of the household diet. *Continue the Trail by walking down the Carriage Drive.*

1.4 The Cascade and Ha-ha: These 1860s Pulhamite installations were to decorate the Old Bishops Palace grounds, to be fitting for Charles Cole-Child's new status as Lord of the Manor. The Ha-ha provided an infinity view whilst keeping local cattle off the lawn.

To continue the Heritage Trail, take a few more paces down the Carriage Drive to reach an elegant porch.

1.5 The Ice-Well, Summerhouse And Canoe Store: This building was all these things before the lack of maintenance resulted in the roof collapse. Before refrigeration, the store allowed ice deserts to served all year when the Bishop entertained. The summerhouse-porch was added by the architect Richard Norman Shaw.

The Trail, carries on down the Carriage Drive to the end, where there is a lawn.

1.6 The Old Bishops Palace: The Bishops of Rochester were Lords of the Manor in Bromley for nearly 1000 years, and the first palace was built in the 1100s. This palace is pimped up with Victorian stone embellishments over a plain classical building from 1775.

The Trail continues by following the path past the buildings, then look for a gate in the hoardings, go through this and follow the path through the shrubbery to the Gates and the Folly.

1.7 The Lord of the Manor's Folly: This building was built as a ruin. It was fashionable for about 200 years to have a ruin in the grounds of your stately home. One of the arches was found when dredging the moat.

To continue the Bromley Town Parks Heritage Trail, turn right, go uphill on Rafford Way, and behind the brick wall you can cross the Bypass via a bridge or at street level. On the other side is Queens Gardens, where the next stop is.

2.1 Queens Gardens: The former White Hart Field: The park occupies most of what was White Hart field, used for public sports, occasions, and grazing horses from the White Hart coaching inn on the High Street.

To continue the Heritage Trail, walk towards the Glades shopping centre and stop by the large Cedar tree next to the entrance.

2.2 The Old Homeopathic Hospital: Bromley was a centre for Homeopathic medicine from its early days in the 1800s until the NHS was founded. The hospital site is now covered by the Glades. Patients recuperating would rest in these gardens.

To continue the Heritage Trail, walk through the Glades shopping centre, then in Market Square, turn left down the High Street until you reach the Churchill Theatre, just past there turn under the arch into Library Gardens.



Queens Gardens with the 2 cedars that are at the Glades doors.

3.1 Neelgharies, George & Emily and their bequest: This level garden was the grounds of Neelgharies house, left to the people of Bromley, for their improvement, by Emily Dowling, the (remarried) widow of George Sparkes. The Churchill Theatre occupies the rest of her bequest.

To continue the Heritage Trail, carry on straight on through the park to the 3rd table-style bench, and there is a path down the hill to your right. Follow this down to the Fishpond.



Neelgharies Gardens and the Carnegie Library

4.1 Church House Gardens: Originally this park was several fish ponds, fed by the springs that rise under the Churchill Theatre. In 1832 Abel Moysey purchased it and laid a garden out. In the Great Depression the amphitheatre was built with a thatched bandstand (burnt down in 1963) in the 'Fishpond'.

To continue the Heritage Trail, turn left along the railings at the side of the water, walking to the bottom of some steps.



4.2 The Herons Lake: The beautiful gardens laid out by Abel Moysey were donated to the people of Bromley in 1932, and a very popular yachting pool (to sail boats that children had constructed) provided where the sandpit is now.

To continue the Heritage Trail, turn left along the edge of the fish pond and along the causeway between that and the sandpit. Go down the left hand side of the sandpit and straight on to the gate. In front, and to the right, is Glassmill Pond.

5.1 This doomsday mill pond is named after the glass-grinding mill that was here. Bought in 1795 (by which time it was a paper mill) by Thomas Ribright and the glass lenses were used in scientific instruments and glasses. His claim to fame was using an early 'electric pile' to give his nuisance neighbour, a young grocer nicknamed 'Lord Fig', a painful shock.

To continue the Heritage Trail, you can choose a long or short route. The long route involves going straight along the pond, crossing the road and climbing the hill to the war memorial, then going out of the gates, and in the park gates diagonally opposite, where there is a carriage drive to a pergola. For the shorter route, retrace your steps to the last stop, and climb up the terraces to the balustrade.

4.3 The Bowie Balustrade: Originally these rails marked the edge of the narrow terrace to Church House, but it's claim to fame is that a photo was taken here of local boy David Bowie with his first band, the Konrads.

To continue the Heritage Trail, continue uphill and on the other side of the trees, on the level ground at the top, is a Carriage Drive in a loop around the flower bed.

4.4 Church House: Church House was a fine gothic building on this site, which was also the site of a Medieval stone house. The circular lawn is the middle of the carriage drive. It was bombed out by the Germans, along with many other town centre buildings, on 16th April 1941

To resume the Heritage Trail, go down the Carriage Drive to the gates, turn left and go through the gates on the other side of the road to the war memorial on Martins Hill



6.1 Martins Hill: The origin of the name is lost, but could be because the sand martins, that nested in the local quarries, would soar on the thermals here. Before it burnt down, you could see Crystal Palace from these benches. The park was saved from being built on, by an early example of a media campaign.

To continue the Heritage Trail: (1) longer route – go down the path lined by lime trees along the top of the park until Deadmans steps, down to the road, are reached. (2) shorter route – retrace steps to the gates, turn left down the road to the High Street. Turn left up the High Street, then right into Walters Yard. Go left and right to the front of the supermarket, then left to the far corner of the car park. The gap here takes you to the K2 phone box.

6.2 Deadman's Steps on Swan Hill: Deadman's steps is on the old coffin way to the Parish Church – or it might be named because of the ghost here of a injured smuggler lying in a pool of blood.

To continue the Heritage Trail, go down the steps and up the hill to the junction. At the car park entrance, turn right down the uphill side of the car park, and the Bromley Zoo mural is on the wall to the left

7. Bromley Zoo in Naval Walk: Behind the shrubs is a playful installation is by Bruce Williams in 2001 to direct people from the car park to the High Street by following the animals escaping from the zoo. See how many animals you can find!

To continue the Heritage Trail, turn left down the alleyway to Bromley High Street. Turn left and in 50 meters you can turn right down College Slip. At the end of this is the K2 Telephone box.



8.1 This 'pocket' park was formerly the plant nursery for the widows in the Bromley and Sheppard colleges. The subsequent commercial nursery was saved from being built on to become this park. The phone box is a K2 model, the first to be rolled out.

The trail continue by going across the road and down leafy North Street. At the end, go past the Railway Tavern and turn down East Street. In another 100 meters turn left up South Street, then right down Court Street. Cross the street diagonally and go down next to the car park, this emerges into Queens Gardens. Turn left here, and

continue to the edge of the park by the crossing.



9. The Kentish Way bypass follows the route of Love Lane, and the lime tree avenue to the Bishops Palace. Bromley Oak (opposite) was at a garden boundary. There was also a road to the Palace Farm, a model farm of the Coles-Childs, Lords of the Manor.

To continue the Heritage Trail, go down the alleyway, and when it emerges onto Rochester Avenue, turn right into the former civic centre. Cross the car park diagonally to the large

beech tree. Just down the old Carriage Drive is St Blaise's Well, the first stop is here.